

HOMES...

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS
ANCESTORS.....

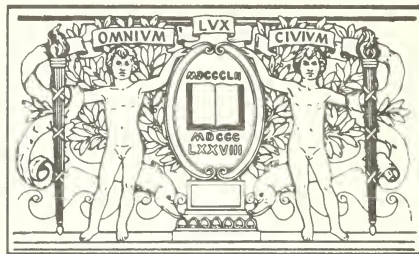
OF

MAJOR GENERAL
JOSEPH HOOKER.



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MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH HOOKER.

FROM PORTRAIT BY J. HARVEY YOUNG, NOW IN THE HOPKINS SCHOOL
AT HADLEY, MASS.

Wellington Pool Esq
with Compliments of the Author

HOMES

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS

ANCESTORS

OF

Major General Joseph Hooker

BY

ISAAC P. GRAGG

BREVET CAPTAIN, U. S. VOLS.

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WALLACE SPOONER, PRINTER


17 PROVINCE STREET

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

HOOKER'S ANCESTRY.

“New England, mother stern and harsh
Couched in the frozen North,
Blest in thy daughters and thy sons,
Thou bringest heroes forth ;
Here Stark and Putnam bravely fought,
And Warren nobly fell ;
And here, in boyhood, Hooker roved
Through every shady dell.”

CAPTAIN W. H. NELSON.

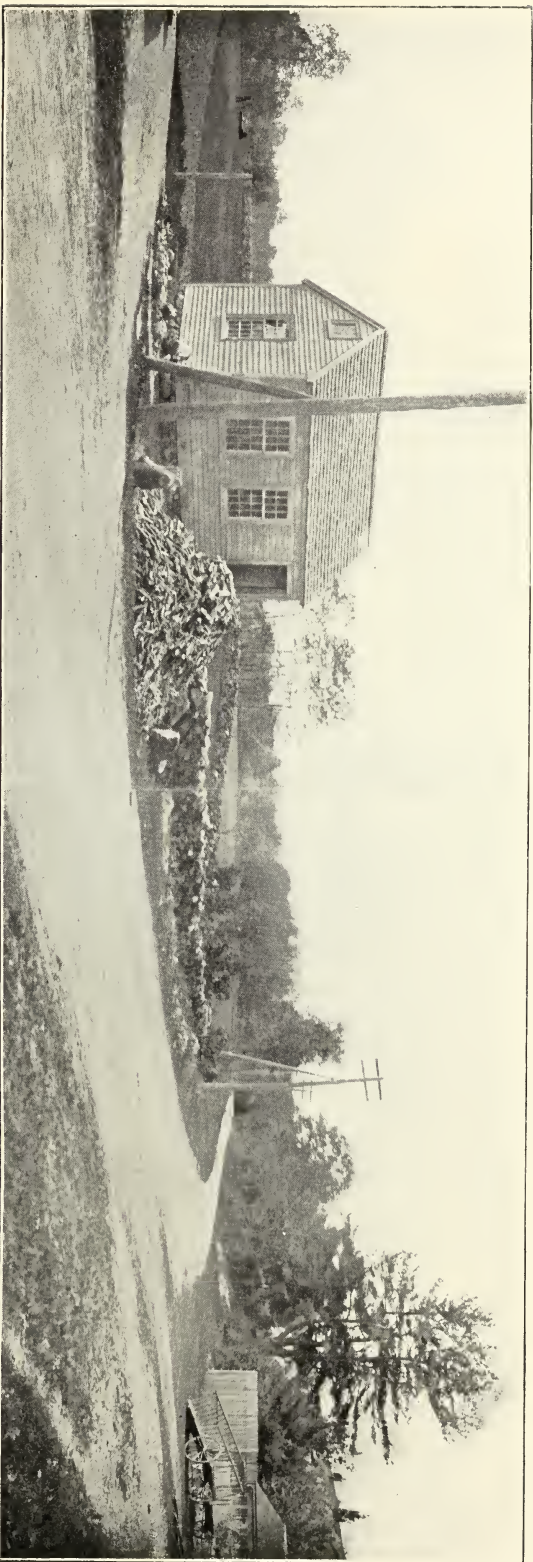
HE magnificent tribute to the patriotism and military ability of Major General Joseph Hooker, made by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1896, in the unanimous vote of both houses of the Legislature appropriating \$50,000 for an equestrian statue of the General, to be placed upon the State House grounds, has led to a deep interest among the citizens of the State in everything that pertains to the history of this branch of the Hooker family.

Until recently it was the supposition that the General's ancestors were of the Connecticut Hookers ; this was not surprising as persons of that name moved from Connecticut up the valley and settled in the region where the Town of Hadley is located and where the General was born.

The Hooker celebration held at Hadley in 1895, under the auspices of the Third Army Corps Union, led the writer of this article to become deeply interested in the General's ancestry and the result of his research has been to gather up the broken links of records and tradition and establish the correctness of the following historical and genealogical story.

It is a most interesting fact that the direct ancestors of General Hooker, for five generations back to the probable emigrant ancestor to these shores, were all named *Joseph* Hooker, and more singular still, that among all the other Hooker families of New England, as far as research has developed, there has not been another Hooker by the name of Joseph, so that the name for the present, ceases with the General, he leaving no descendants.

It cannot be established as yet where the emigrant Joseph Hooker came from, but it seems probable that he came from the south of England or from the Isle of Jersey; some of the settlers at Marblehead and other fishing stations along the north shores of Massachusetts Bay were from the Isle of Jersey; there was a family of Hookers residing at Marblehead in the early days, of whom little is known.



(Old Well.)

SITE OF THE HOOKER HOUSE IN WEST WENHAM, MASS. HOUSE BUILT IN 1699.

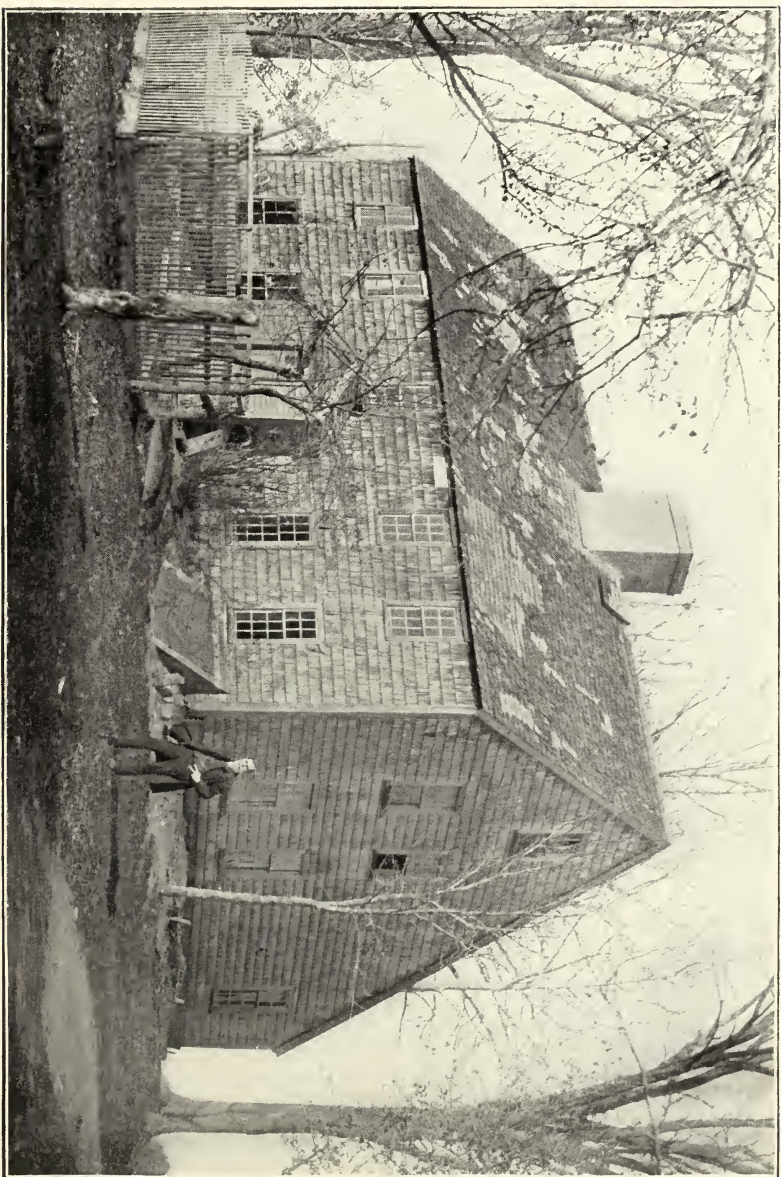
In 1673 a Mathew Hooker came to that portion of Ipswich then known as Chebaco, now the town of Essex, and married "Quartermaster John Perkin's Mayd Rachel": in the vote of the selectmen of Ipswich requiring Perkins to give bonds for Hooker becoming a reliable inhabitant, Hooker is described as a "Jersie man"; the immediate descendants of this Mathew Hooker resided in Ipswich, Hamilton and Wenham and while they may have been related to the Joseph Hooker family there is no reliable evidence that such was the case.

WENHAM.

On March 26, 1689, Edward Whittington of Wenham sold to "Joseph Hooker inhabitant of Wenham and to John Berry inhabitant of Lyn," land in Wenham. When Hooker (1) first arrived in Wenham or where he came from is unknown; on the town records the name generally appears as Hacker, in the deeds of real estate on record at Salem as Hooker and on the records of the church as both Hacker and Hooker; he does not appear to be related to the "Willyam Hacker" family of Salem who died in 1661.

At a meeting of the freeholders of Wenham on March 10, 1696, "Joseph Hacker was accepted to be a commoner in this town ;" November 6 of the same year "Goodman Hacker had liberty granted to him to gett timber on ye towne commons for the building a barne twenty footte square ;" the term "Goodman" applied to heads of families or to inhabitants of approved standing: November 1697 his name appears on a list of persons to whom a certain tax laid in 1696, was refunded, owing to land at Wildman's neck not having been purchased: January 8, 1699, he was "granted liberty to cut timber for a dwelling house twenty six footte long and eighteen footte wide and timber for boards and plank for covering, inclosing and finishing it."

This dwelling house evidently took the place of a previous temporary structure; it was located on a level field in the extreme west part of Wenham on the south side of the road that runs to Putnamville, very near the town line between Wenham and Danvers; it set back from the road some 250 feet, faced to the south, with a well about 25 feet in front of it: in those days it was not uncommon to build houses facing exactly to the south, irrespective as to how they faced the road, this was partly to get the sun and partly because the shadow of the great square chimney



THE COLONEL KENT HOUSE IN WEST WENHAM, MASS., (BEFORE ALTERATIONS,) SUPPOSED TO BE A
DUPLICATE OF THE OLD HOOKER HOUSE IN WENHAM.

in the centre acted as a sun dial on the sloping roof in the rear.

It was quite a respectable structure for those early days, being two stories in front and two lower stories in the rear and similar in style to the old Col. Kent house in that neighborhood as it was before General Peach recently altered it for a summer residence ; it contained the usual spacious kitchen with its large fireplace, had a small porch in front, and an ell on one side at the rear.

The Hookers sold the house to John Baker and others, and later on, it was owned by Warren Peabody whose daughter Mrs. Martha Morgan now lives in the same locality at an advanced age ; she distinctly remembers the old house having lived in it from 4 to 14 years of age ; it was taken down in 1842 and to-day only the old well and a few fragments of bricks in the soil, from the chimney, remain to mark the spot.

January 12, 1705, Joseph Hooker appears among the freeholders who agreed to divide the common lands of Wenham ; March 2, 1724, he was chosen surveyor of highways for the west end of the town.

His wife's name was Anna, their children were :

- I. ELIZABETH, bapt. 1692.
- II. JOSEPH (2), bapt. 1694.
- III. ANNA, b. February 17, 1696, died young.
- IV. ANNA, b. June 26, 1698, married Nathaniel Woods of Salem, Mass.
- V. SARAH, b. 1701, married Thomas Curtis of Littleton, Mass.
- VI. LYDIA, bapt. August, 1704.

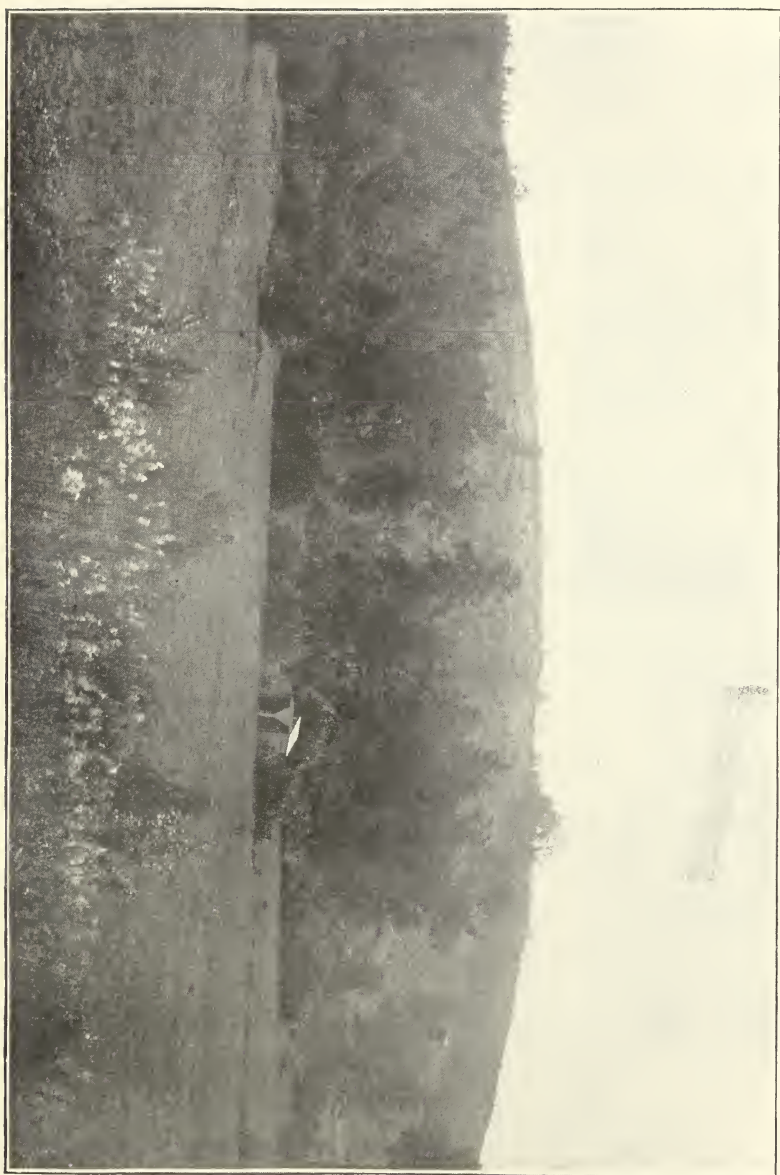
Joseph Hooker (2) married Jane Rankin of Wenham in 1726; their two oldest children were born there, viz:

- I. JOHN, in November 13, 1726.
- II. ANNA, in December 29, 1727.

The Wenham church records show when the several members of these families "owned the covenant," were "admitted to full communion," or were "baptized."

LITTLETON.

The Hookers like many of the early settlers along the shores of Massachusetts Bay yearned for larger landed possessions and moved further inland as lands were available for settlement.



NASHOBA HILL, ON LINE BETWEEN LITTLETON AND WESTFORD, MASS.

February 3, 1731-2, by a deed signed by both father and son and their wives, they sold to John Baker, house carpenter, Benjamin Herrick and Josiah Herrick, husbandmen, for the sum of £703 "the homestead as it is now bounded, 10 acres and 63 rods, with ye dwelling house and barn standing thereon, also two common rights in the Great Swamp called Wenham Swamp, also 29 acres and 4 acres of land in Salem," and removed to the eastern part of the town of Littleton in Middlesex County; March 25, 1732, Joseph Hooker (2) purchased 60 acres and buildings thereon of Jonathan Powers, blacksmith, and deeded the same to "his honored father" Joseph Hooker (1) of Littleton, yeoman. In 1733 it was transferred by deed to his son-in-law, Thomas Curtis.

The two families lived together in Littleton only four years, during that period Joseph Hooker (2) and his wife Jane had born to them two more children, viz :

III. JOSEPH (3), b. 1733, and

IV. BENJAMIN, b. 1735.

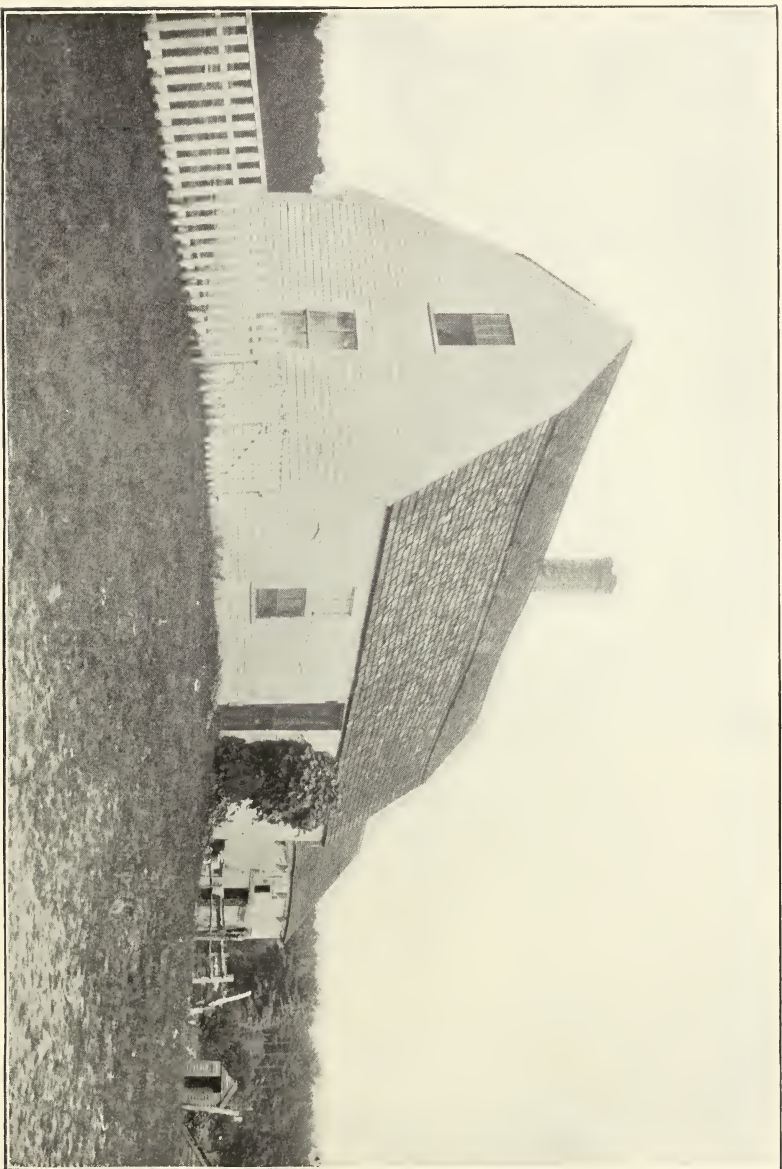
The exact location of the home in Littleton it has been impossible to ascertain, but it was undoubtedly in the vicinity of Nashoba hill.

WESTFORD.

On February 24, 1736, Joseph Hooker (1) bought of Josiah Powers 100 acres and dwelling thereon, located just across the Littleton line in the town of Westford, the farm having previously been owned by Joseph Temple, this location was also in the vicinity of Nashoba hill.

On a map of Westford made in 1730, this house is shown as owned by Walter Powers and it must have been built as early as 1715 ; it is still in a fair state of perservation and occupied by a veteran soldier of the 26th Mass. Vol. Infantry of 1861-65 named John Wayne. A few years ago Wayne pulled down the large old fashioned chimney in order to make more room inside and built a smaller one which somewhat detracts from the ancient aspect of the structure.

At this homestead Joseph Hooker (1) and his wife Anna died sometime previous to 1753, as appears by certificate to a deed, but no record of their deaths or burial place exists: from there John Hooker, son of Joseph (2), went in 1744 to join Captain Ebenezer Alexander's company of General Pepperell's regiment for the Louisburg expedition: a return made out at Louisburg in



HOME OF THE HOOKER FAMILY IN WESTFORD, MASS., FROM 1736 TO 1765. (NOW STANDING.)

September 1745 states that "John Hooker was one of the gunners a Sistance at ye advance Batry & was Blown up By a cartrege of powder with John Whitelock;" young John was sent back to the Boston hospital in October 1745 and discharged from hospital, January 27th, 1746; he afterwards lived at Falls Town, now Bernardston, and then at Sutherland, Mass.

From this same dwelling young Joseph Hooker (3) marched away to the French and Indian war in 1755, at the age of 22; the September previous his father had deeded to him the farm and homestead and on his return from service he married Ruth Powers of Westford, on April 7, 1756.

In 1757 both his and his wife's name appear on the church records of Westford as "owning the covenant;" they had born to them in Westford children as follows:

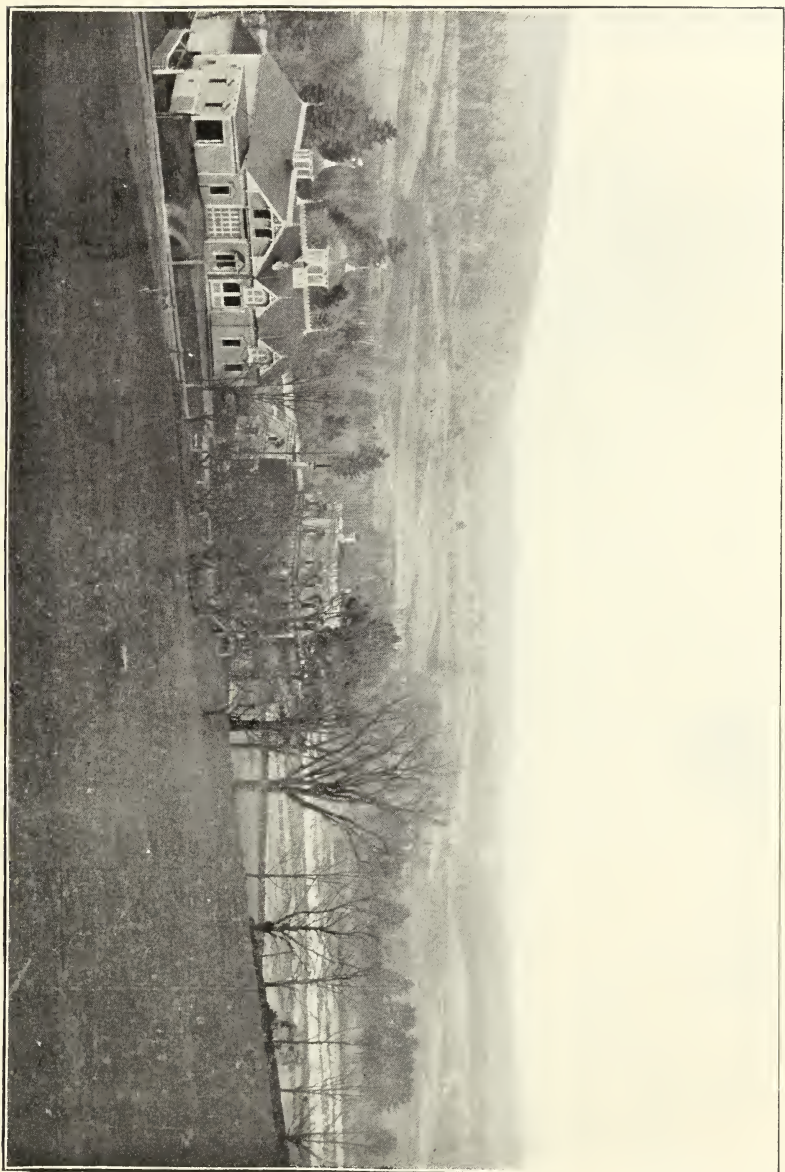
- I. JOHN, bapt. October 15, 1758, married Hannah Fields, of Greenwich.
- II. BENJAMIN, bapt. November 30, 1760, married Esther Woodward, of Greenwich.
- III. JOSEPH (4) the father of the General, bapt. July 10, 1763, married 1st, Nancy Spear, of Greenwich, and 2nd, Mary Seymour, of Hadley.

GREENWICH.

The assessors' tax lists of Westford from 1740 to 1765 contain the names of Joseph Hooker (2) and Joseph Hooker, Jr. (3); on the list for 1766 Joseph Hooker (2) is reported as having moved to Hardwick; it is very doubtful if the family ever resided in Hardwick, though on March 25, 1758, Elisha Higgins of Hardwick, yeoman, sold to Joseph Hooker (3) of Westford, yeoman, 60 acres in the west part of Hardwick, this same land was sold by Joseph Hooker (3) of Greenwich to Jesse Snow of Hardwick in 1772, and as neither deed mentions any buildings, the land probably was bought with the intention of settling in Hardwick, but Hooker passed on to the adjoining town of Greenwich.

Joseph Hooker (2) resided in Westford in 1763, the date of the baptism of his son Joseph (4) and was at Greenwich in 1765, the date of the baptism of his daughter Ruth, the same year he is taxed by the assessors of Hardwick as a non-resident, while his father Joseph (2) was at Westford in 1765, as per tax list and at Greenwich in 1766 as per deed.

The Hookers lived in that part of Greenwich which is now the town of Enfield, the site of



SITE OF CAPTAIN JOSEPH HOOKER'S FARM AT GREENWICH, MASS., 1765 TO 1810.
(NOW INCLUDED IN THE LIMITS OF ENFIELD.)

the old homestead being the same as that now occupied by the residence of Edward P. Smith, Esq.; the property bounded on the Swift River and in the near vicinity of the Swift River Woolen Mills; the original house was a square two story structure, painted red, the roof sloping to a common centre, with the usual large square chimney; in later years the property passed into the hands of Mr. Sheldon Warner who made considerable alterations in the old house: the barn was moved back from the road and the house still further enlarged and improved by the present owner.

Here Joseph Hooker (3) and his wife Ruth had born to them additional children as follows:

IV. RUTH, bapt. October 13, 1765, married Robert Barton.

V. MARY, bapt. April 16, 1768, married John Lawton, of Petersham.

VI. MORIAH, bapt. August 11, 1771, married Timothy Dean, of Greenwich.

VII. RACHEL, bapt. August 11, 1771, married George Caswell, of Greenwich.

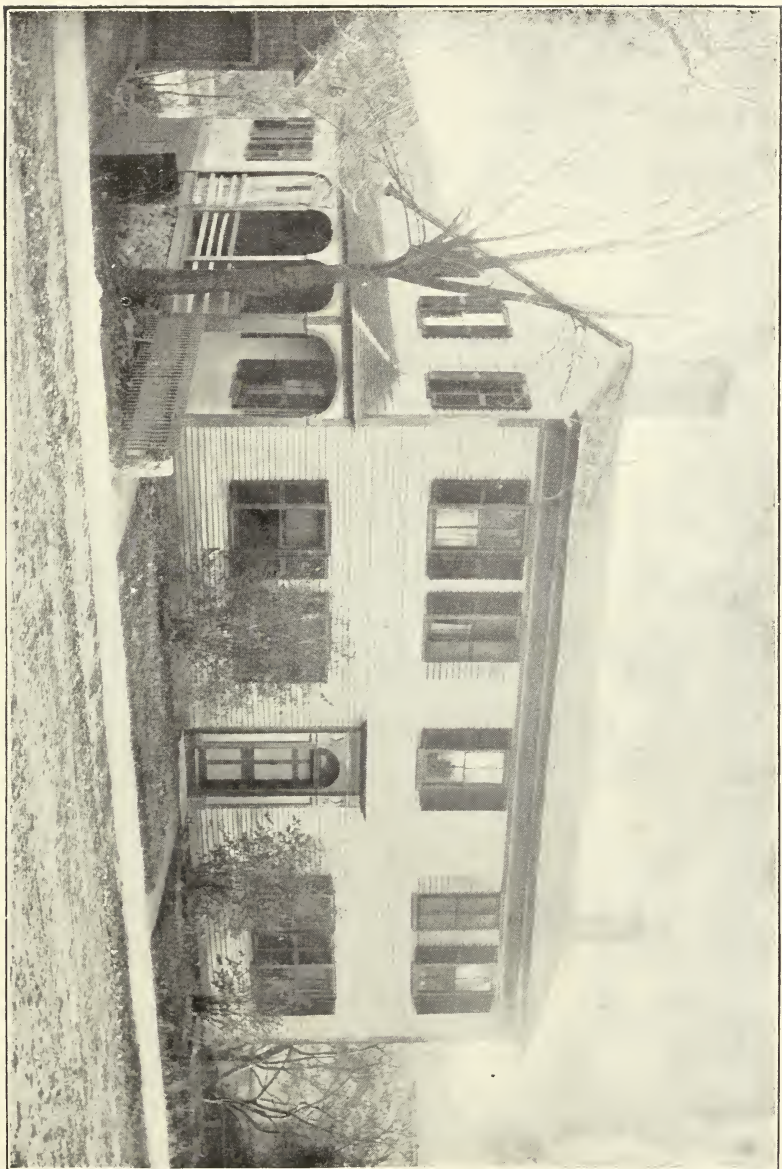
VIII. EUNICE, bapt. May 9, 1773.

Joseph Hooker (2) passed away at Greenwich, on December 31, 1777; of the death of his wife Jane we have no record.

The Revolutionary War found the Hookers at Greenwich and like the great majority of the

surviving veterans of the French and Indian Wars, Joseph Hooker (3) was well fitted to become a soldier of the patriot army and we naturally find him as Captain heading the company of minute men that marched from Greenwich to Cambridge on the Lexington Alarm of April 19, 1775. The following December he appears as a First Lieutenant in Captain Elijah Dwight's company of Colonel Ruggles Woodbridge's regiment at the Siege of Boston: March 16, 1776, he was elected Captain of the second company of the 4th Hampshire regiment; from December 1776 to March 1777 he served with the Continental Army at Morristown, N. J., as a Captain of a company in Lieut. Col. Samuel William's regiment: in March 1779 we find his name, with rank of Captain, on a return of men engaged in the Continental Army from the town of Greenwich: June 29, 1780, he was elected Captain of the 11th Company of Colonel Elisha Porter's 4th Hampshire regiment of militia.

The two elder sons followed the example of their father, John serving as a private in Lieutenant Josiah Wilson's company of Colonel Elisha Porter's regiment in the movement to the northward in 1777 to re-enforce General Gates, and Benjamin enlisted at the age of fifteen, in March 1776, serving one year in Captain Thomas Wel-



RESIDENCE OF HOSEA HOOKER, ESQ., ENFIELD, MASS.

lington's company of Colonel Whitcomb's regiment; he next joined the Continental Army for a six month's term of service for the town of Palmer in 1780-81, serving as private in Colonel Nixons's regiment and being transferred to Colonel Shepard's regiment; from August 12 to November 15, 1781, he served in Captain Oliver Coney's company of Colonel Sears's regiment.

Previous to the Revolutionary War and up to the date of his death in 1777, Joseph Hooker (2) is designated in deeds as "gentleman" instead of "yeoman"; after the war Joseph Hooker (3) is generally designated as "captain" and his son Joseph (4) as "junior"; together with Benjamin, they appear to have owned considerable real estate in Greenwich and gave the land on which the church was built; on the division of the town into two parishes they became members of the south parish, now Enfield, and sold the land for the new meeting house and a portion of the burying ground adjoining. At the sale of the pews of the south meeting house in 1787 Captain Hooker purchased three pews.

Captain Hooker's wife, Ruth, died in 1804, the gravestone to her memory is now standing in the old cemetery at Greenwich Plain's while the Captain's grave is identified by the bronze

marker of the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Of Captain Hooker's sons, John moved to Hinsdale, N. H. and died there, leaving a son, Hosea, b. 1789, and a daughter, Hannah, b. 1792, both of whom returned to Enfield. Hosea Hooker's house is standing to-day on the main street at Enfield, near the meeting house; Joseph (4) after the death of his first wife moved to Hadley in 1806, and Benjamin after residing at Greenwich until 1810, lived at Belchertown and Pelham, finally removing to Hadley, there rejoining his brother Joseph.

HADLEY.

The Hadley elms! In what forgotten year
Men planted them to make our village fair
We cannot know. The sun, and earth, and air
Have fostered them, and those who set them here
Have fled so far beyond, even History's ear
Scarce knows their footfall. Lasting, precious, rare —
This gift they left. What glory shalt thou wear,
Oh, Hadley, — Hadley, that we hold so dear,
From this our generation? These gifts, these,
Would we leave with thee for thy joy and praise,
For the Republic's need in bitter days,
True men, good women, beneath the Hadley trees,
When danger threatens, and sorrow overwhelms
To stand strong, beautiful, as Hadley Elms.

JULIA TAFT BAYNE.



BIRTH-PLACE OF MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH HOOKER, HADLEY, MASS., FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT
THIRD ARMY CORPS REUNION IN 1895.

Joseph Hooker (4), father of the General, on May 21, 1805, purchased of William Porter, Samuel Porter and Moses Porter, all of Hadley, "the lot and buildings in Hadley on which Major Eleazer Porter lately lived": to his house he brought his second wife, Mary Seymour of Hadley, and here their children were born, as follows:

- I. NANCY SPEAR, b. July 22nd, 1806, married William Wood, of Watertown, N. Y.
- II. MARY SEYMOUR, b. November 28th, 1808, married Orville V. Brainard, of Canan-dagua, N. Y.
- III. SARAH ROWLEY, b. October 13th, 1811, married Rev. M. L. R. P. Thompson, of Cincinnati, O.
- IV. JOSEPH (5), the General, b. November 13th, 1814, married Olivia A. Groesbeck, of Cincinnati, O.

The house was of the familiar hip roof style of architecture of those early days and must have been built from 50 to 75 years previous to his purchase of it from the Porter family; it was located on that grand and ancient main avenue of Old Hadley named West Street, the pride of its people from the earliest days of the historic town and on the green sward of its centre and under

the shade of those magnificent elms, young Hooker breathed in the pure air from those Hampshire hills and laid the basis for that manly strength and heroic mould of form that were to serve him so well in time of need, little dreaming that his baby hands were one day to wield a powerful sword in his country's cause.

The noble tree, under whose spreading branches the homestead almost seemed to nestle, was but a specimen of many similar ones still standing on that famous street and the leaves on their graceful limbs have fluttered in the air from the vibrations caused by the yell of hostile indians, the tramp of Burgoyne's captured veterans marching between their patriot guards and the huzzas of the veterans of the civil war as they saluted the birthplace of "fighting Joe Hooker."

During a visit to Hadley in his declining years, the General sitting in an open carriage in which he had been driven over from Northampton and taking a loving look at the old homestead and its surroundings, his mind wandering back to the playmates of his childhood days, his eyes glancing upward into its familiar foliage, said, "the old tree looks just as it always did." On April 6th, 1898, the General's birthplace was destroyed by a fire that started on an adjoining estate, the grand old elm being scorched and damaged to an ex-



GENERAL HOOKER'S BOYHOOD HOME ON MIDDLE STREET, HADLEY, MASS.

tent that was fatal to its majestic beauty, but the bronze tablet placed on the house by the Third Army Corps Union in 1895, was saved and is preserved by the town.

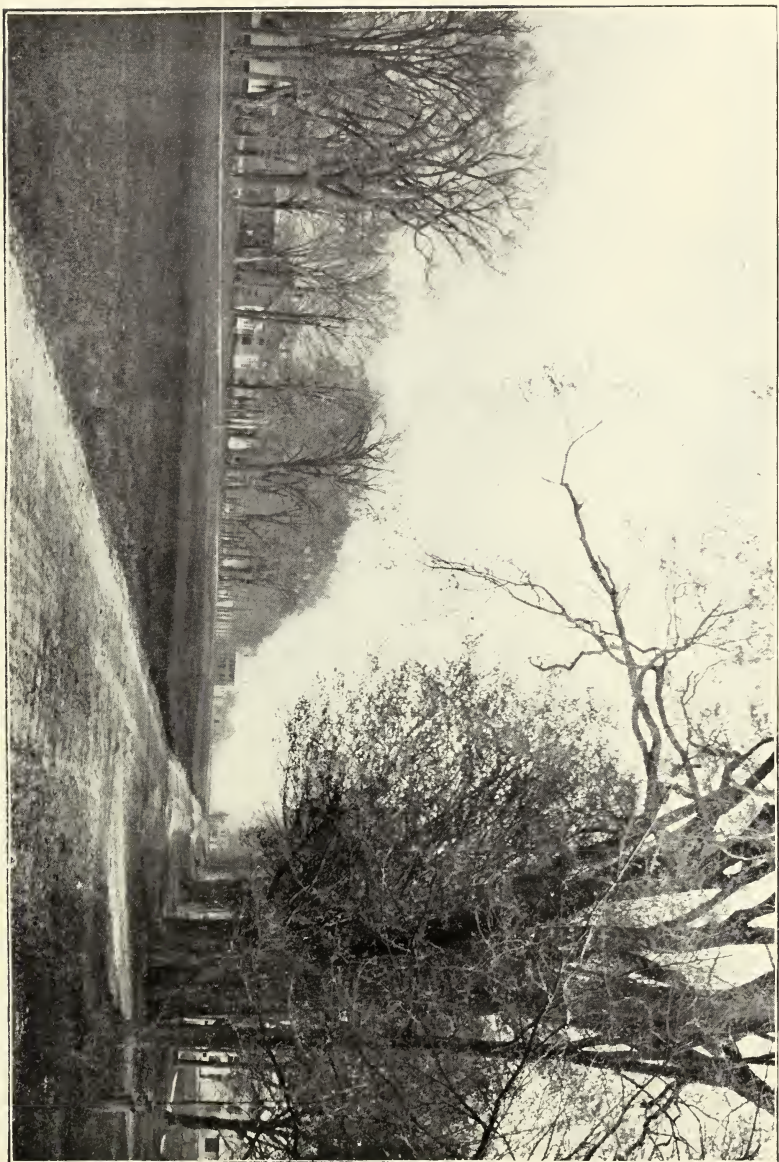
In 1817 the house was sold to John Hopkins of Boston and the family removed to what is known as the Deacon Williams place on Middle Street. Here young Hooker grew to manhood being ever popular with his playmates and fellow schoolmates; they all remembered him as a manly youth of frank and generous nature. Subsequently the family resided in two hired houses on West Street, now known as the Stall and Sewell Dickinson houses; to these homes Cadet Hooker came from West Point to pass his vacations with his loving parents and sisters, they were so proud of him, resplendent in his grey uniform, gilt buttons and white trousers, and of course he was the envy of all the village boys and had to encounter the admiring glances of all the girls of the neighborhood, which he undoubtedly submitted to with resignation and fortitude. A well known lady of western Massachusetts, who knew him at that period, has said that she never has seen a more perfect picture of manly grace and beauty than he presented on these occasions.

All three of the daughters having married and located in New York State, both parents

removed from Hadley to Watertown, N. Y., in 1837, where the father, Joseph (4), died November 24th, 1852, and the mother on January 4th, 1857.

The late Joseph Hooker Wood of Chicago was a nephew of General Hooker, being the son of Nancy Spear Hooker and William Wood; he was born at Watertown, N. Y., June 3rd, 1838. His services during the Civil War were as follows: February 20th, 1863, Private 2nd U. S. Cavalry; February 25th, 1863, Second Lieutenant 6th U. S. Cavalry; July 3rd, 1863, Brevet First Lieutenant U. S. A., for gallantry at the Battle of Gettysburg where he was severely wounded; July 4th, 1864, Brevet Captain U. S. A., for meritorious services in the campaign against the Sioux Indians; October 20th, 1864, First Lieutenant 6th U. S. Cavalry. In the Volunteers he held the following commissions: September 16, 1863, Major 15th New York Cavalry, serving with the Army of the Potomac and being in many engagements; April 15, 1865, Lieut-Colonel 2nd New York Mounted Rifles, he was commissioned full Colonel of the regiment but not mustered; mustered out of the volunteer service August 10, 1865.

He resigned from the Regular Army on May 7, 1867, and later on located in Chicago, Ill.



A VIEW ON WEST STREET, HADLEY, MASS.

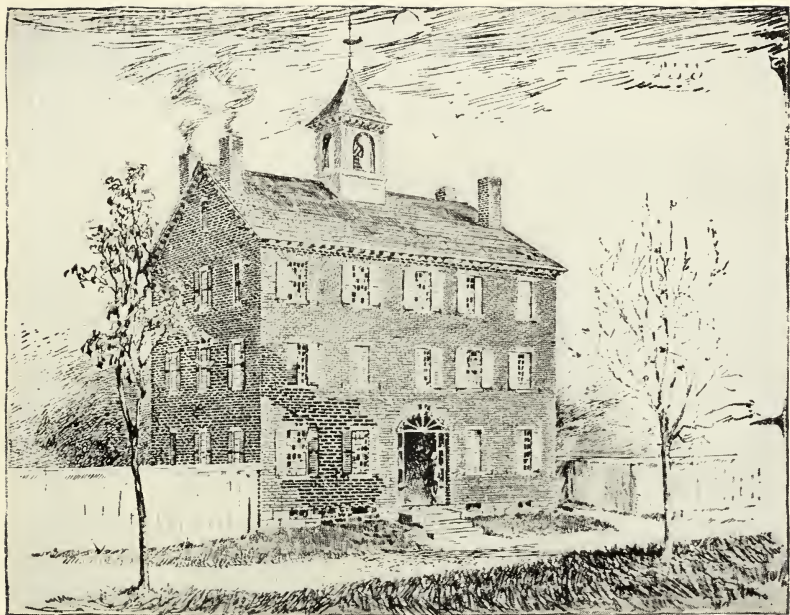
He was a charter member of the Western Society of the Army of the Potomac and its President in 1894, a member of the Illinois Commandery, Military Order of the Loyal Legion; George H. Thomas Post No. 5, G. A. R. of Chicago, and an Honorary Member of the Third Army Corps Union. He died September 21, 1900, while serving as Chairman of the Executive Committee for the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, held in Chicago that year; he was prominent in railroad and military circles of that city.

Benjamin Hooker, the General's uncle, the revolutionary veteran, continued to live at Hadley until his death in 1835; he left many descendants among them a grandson, Lewis B. Hooker of Hadley, who served as a sergeant in the 52nd Mass. Vols. in 1862-3; but to-day Hadley and vicinity has but few distant relatives of the General among its population and none of the family name, but his ruddy face and martial bearing still are in evidence there in the excellent portrait by J. Harvey Young, hanging on the walls of the Hopkins Academy on Russell Street, in which institution he prepared for his West Point career and Old Hadley will for all time cherish the memory of her famous and patriotic son.

General Joseph Hooker (5) died at Garden City, Long Island, N. Y., October 31st, 1879. His wife, Olivia, died July 15, 1868, at Watertown, N. Y.; they are both buried in the Spring Grove Cemetery at Cincinnati, Ohio.

THE STATUE.

In providing for the statue of General Hooker, the Commonwealth paid an unusual tribute to one of her illustrious sons; it is the more marked as she has heretofore been very conservative in this method of honoring her great men; but the unanimity with which both houses of the Legislature, under a suspension of the rules, passed the appropriation, the petitions in support of the bill coming from all sections of the State, signed by merchants, soldiers, clergy, statesmen, all the then living Ex-Governors of Massachusetts, scholars, Posts of the Grand Army of the Republic, eminent sons of Massachusetts residing in other States, all combined to demonstrate that the mass of the people recognized the wisdom of setting up, as it were a standard of valor, of disinterested patriotism, of loyalty to the



HOPKINS ACADEMY, HADLEY, MASS., 1815-1860, WHERE GENERAL HOOKER WAS
EDUCATED PREVIOUS TO ENTERING WEST POINT.

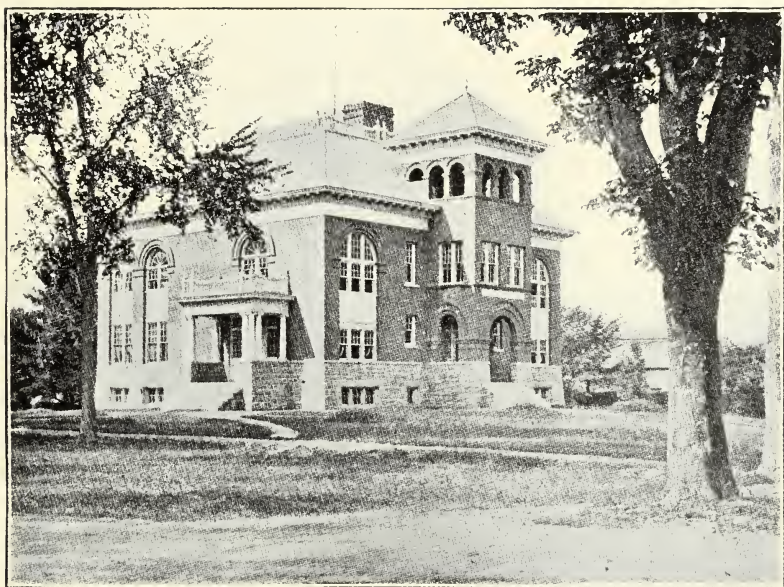
principles of liberty and handing it down for future generations to emulate.

It is not to honor Hooker alone, but Hooker as a representative soldier of Massachusetts ; we have not traced his lineage back to wealth or rank, neither are we able to produce a family coat of arms with which to illuminate these few pages, which only show that he sprang from the sturdy yeomanry of the forefathers, sovereigns of the soil of a free country, who defended the colonial frontier, captured Louisburg and fought the Revolution. New England owes much to those early emigrants to its shores who came to found a community based on the Rights of Man, ever laying the foundations of good government, good morals, and education and with homely and steadfast faith toiling on for its achievement and teaching their children to do likewise ; it was their blood in his veins that intensified his patriotism.

It is to stand for Hooker, the trained officer of the Regular Army, his talents and capacity developed by education at his country's expense, the Mexican war veteran, who at the bugle call to arms returned to duty to help save the Union and who promptly recognized the fact that the real strength of the Republic in the crisis was the American Volunteer ; those under his immediate command intuitively feeling the bond that

drew them together; he, their commander always, to be obeyed; they, his loyal citizen soldiers ever to be trusted to do the best that was in them to carry out the orders of a competent commander; he, patient with their faults and their early crude endeavors to become veterans; they, ready to endure for the cause and in the hour of battle to face death manfully; he, with them at the front sharing the dangers as well as the honors of the struggle.

He was their "Fighting Joe"; a Major-General, but every Private is now proud to feel that his bronze statue will stand on the State House grounds as his representative.



HOPKINS SCHOOL AND ACADEMY, 1895, CONTAINING PORTRAIT OF GENERAL HOOKER.

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